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ABSTRACT

The major objective of this project was the preparation of instructional packets for vocational orientation at the elementary level. A developmental workshop and related seminars on this theme involved five teachers, two counselors, and a principal, all for the elementary grade levels, in addition to various state agencies and educational personnel in a year-long exemplary project. About 56 occupational modules were developed, and 38 were tested in the participants' schools and other pilot Arkansas schools. The materials were reproduced in booklet form after necessary changes, revisions, and evaluation. Occupational information was secured by interviewing students, parents, and local employees and used in preparing these integrated career awareness packets for a social studies curriculum. Audiovisual aids, bibliographies, and resource materials were gathered and reviewed prior to statewide dissemination of the packets for use by elementary teachers during the 1972 school year. A teaching guide resulting from this project will be used in local pilot programs in vocational education for small Arkansas schools at that time. (AG)

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION PACKETS FOR USE BY TEACHERS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Project Number: C7121 PL 90-576

FINAL REPORT

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August, 1972
Department of Education
Division of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education
Little Rock, Arkansas

FINAL REPORT

Project #C7121 PL 90-576

Project Title: The Development of Vocational Orientation Packets for Use by Teachers in the Elementary School

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Duration of Project: May 1, 1971 - June 30, 1972

The Problem: Youth in the elementary grades are regarded as very impressionistic and in general, through contacts with their parents and teachers, acquire certain concepts and ideas regarding careers (work) that may affect them throughout their lifetime. The cry for relevancy in the public school curriculum suggests that there are certain inadequacies in the present system and suggests the need for some adjustments or changes. As educators face the charge for reorientation of the education system, it is very possible, and has been strongly suggested by many groups, including the Federal Congress, that the development of a system of vocational (career) guidance and vocational education can bring about the development of a sub-system in the education program, reaching from kindergarten

throughout the work life of an individual.

It has been suggested that one of the goals for vocational guidance in the elementary curriculum is to develop in all youth respect for all work and that this concept become one of the basic elements of the educational curriculum in the elementary school. It is not to be implied that youth should make an occupational choice at the end of elementary school, but rather that they develop attitudes toward work that will enable them to make decisions at a later time with, hopefully, an open mind. A Task Force on Vocational-Technical Education, established in one of the major cities in the country, concluded in its report that there is a need for career (occupational) orientation and exploration during the early years of school. The report suggested that exploration of the world of work ought to begin at the kindergarten level and be an integrated part of the curriculum through all grade levels. The group further recommended that each student should be given a realistic concept of the actual content of all levels of occupations from unskilled jobs to semi-skilled and skilled craft levels, technical and service occupations, business and clerical occupations, through the professions. The report emphasized that the program should be structured and conducted without prejudiced opinions or value judgements as to the relative worth or importance of the various ways the citizens of this country make their contributions to society.

A second goal which appropriately relates to the one just mentioned is to motivate all youth to want to take their place in the world of work. This goal suggests the concept of "do

something" rather than "be somebody." The "be somebody" complex may very well be one that causes parents to "force" their children into decisions that are not only unwise, but unreal, due to the implications of status. The "be somebody" complex suggests identity with positions providing social status to the individual and his parents - doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief. Are parents and educators willing to admit an obsession with the socially acceptable professions to the extent that all other occupations are reduced to a level of menial tasks and stripped of the pride of achievement that goes with such work?

People in the large city soon learn the importance of sanitation department workers when collections are stopped because of a strike or curtailed because of the lack of labor. People who accept welfare as a way of life lose the satisfaction that comes only with achievement through work. Work in itself is a means by which man earns his daily bread, earns self-respect and respect of others, and a self-discipline necessary for effective citizenship in a democratic society.

It isn't unreasonable to accept the premise that acceptance and implementation of a program of Vocational Orientation in the elementary school could develop in all youth respect for work and motivate them to develop a desire to want to find and accept their place in the world of work. To make a beginning and to offer assistance to teachers this project was focused upon the development of resource and instructional materials that are geared to youth at various grade levels in the elementary school.

The knowledge and skills of teachers, counselors, educators, and others representing the elementary school were utilized. The project was aimed at career orientation, and many persons who are now using the materials were involved in their development.

Objective of Project: The major objective of the project was the preparation of instructional units aimed at providing vocational orientation for elementary school children, grades one through six. This was done by involving elementary school personnel and other educational specialists who had expertise and experience in the preparation and use of vocational orientation materials or who were willing to give special attention to developing and trying out of such materials as a basis for the development of a career awareness book for statewide use.

Procedures: The project involved a workshop and related seminars on vocational orientation for elementary school children conducted under the direction of the Division of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education during the period of May 1, 1971, to June 30, 1972. A number of supporting agencies were involved, including Guidance Service of the State Department of Education, personnel from the University of Arkansas, public school personnel, and consultants.

The key participants were five elementary teachers, two elementary counselors and one elementary principal who assisted in the preparation of the materials, tried out the materials during the 1971-72 academic year, and assisted in the revision and refinement.

The major part of the developmental work was done through workshop activity during June and July, 1971. The participating personnel spent four weeks working together and in smaller groups on different grade levels developing the orientation materials.

During the first week of the workshop, the project staff was involved in orienting the participants to a career awareness concept focusing on the social studies curriculum. It was emphasized that career awareness was to be an integral part of the education structure rather than additional subject matter tacked on to the curriculum.

Much of the second week was devoted to developing occupational modules to be used with the social studies curriculum. Occupational modules were developed which would be common to most communities in Arkansas. After several modules had been drafted by the participants, they were provided with guides for making personal interviews in their local communities. The third week was spent in their local communities interviewing parents of students and other employees working in typical occupations in that locale. These teachers were encouraged to use tape recorders when possible to secure occupational information for refining modules already developed and in developing additional ones.

The participants spent their final week in the Department of Education. During this week they reworked the occupational modules and made use of information collected in their home communities as well as information from textbooks to be used in

their local schools.

Upon concluding the workshop, the project staff devoted some four weeks to further refining the materials and coordinating bibliographies and support materials. Furthermore, the project staff reviewed all audiovisual aids in the Department of Education and resource materials provided by various companies for possible use by participants in the career awareness project.

Some 56 occupational modules were developed and 38 were compiled for testing. These materials were tested in the parent schools of the participants and the pilot schools participating in Arkansas' exemplary project. The teachers were involved in a series of meetings during the year regarding problems, changes, and revisions that should be made in the materials.

After all necessary revisions and changes had been made, two educators were employed to edit the materials prior to developing the final draft for printing. These two consultants were elementary administrators with considerable experience in teaching and supervising elementary teachers and were very helpful in preparing the final draft.

The revised materials were reproduced in booklet form and are being disseminated statewide for use by elementary teachers during the 1972-73 school year.

Evaluation: A simple evaluation instrument was used by participating teachers to check the effectiveness of the use of the materials upon students. The instrument was designed to ascertain the students growth in knowledge of occupations and their change of attitudes toward the various occupations. Results showed that students

who participated in the program were more knowledgeable of the world of work and had a better attitude toward "blue collared" type jobs.

Results: The materials developed were designed to help elementary teachers to integrate career awareness within the framework of the existing curriculum. All occupations were not included due to the lack of time and funds; however, resourceful teachers will develop additional units relevant to the businesses and industries in the local community. As a result of this project, a book titled "Elementary Teacher's Guide, CAREER AWARENESS" has been published. Copies have been mailed to all State Directors of Vocational Education. It is now being used in nine schools that are participating in an exemplary project entitled "Pilot Occupational Education Programs for Small Rural and Sub-Urban Arkansas Schools" and will be put to use in other schools during the 1972-73 school year. Copies are being mailed to elementary principals throughout the state.